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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/J, AF/SPG, IO/PSC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/11/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL MARR KPKO SU JA

SUBJECT: JAPAN MULLS GREATER PEACEKEEPING PARTICIPATION IN AFRICA

Classified By: DCM James P. Zumwalt per reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (S) During a December 10 meeting with Embassy poloff, MOFA First Africa Division Principal Deputy Director Naoki Takahashi and Sudan Desk Officer Sho Nishimura said that although Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada has spoken publicly in favor of increased Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) participation in African peacekeeping missions, particularly in Sudan, internal GOJ interagency discussions continue and neither a decision nor a formal announcement regarding an expanded JSDF role in African peacekeeping is imminent.

¶2. (S) Tadashi said that although FM Okada's public statements support an increased JSDF role in African peacekeeping operations, the decision regarding such a policy shift did not rest with MOFA alone but also involved the Cabinet Peacekeeping Office and the Ministry of Defense. At present, these three agencies are working together to review options and consider possible ways to increase Japan's role in peacekeeping operations. Nishimura said that the GOJ was looking at several options for increased JSDF participation in peacekeeping and that Sudan was only one of several possibilities. That said, he conceded that Sudan could be among the most feasible and was therefore one of the more likely candidates.

¶3. (S) According to Takahashi and Nishimura, MOFA and the Cabinet's Peacekeeping Office are generally supportive of broader JSDF peacekeeping participation, as is the civilian side of the Ministry of Defense (MOD). They characterized the uniformed side of MOD as being the most reticent about possible increased peacekeeping activities. Noting, however, the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)-led Hatoyama administration's intention to strengthen the political leadership's control of policy formation and reduce the career bureaucracy's role, Nishimura stressed the final decision would be made at the political level.

¶4. (S) Nishimura said that the current interagency discussions within the GOJ are very sensitive and he asked for U.S. understanding and discretion as they continue. He noted while MOFA has been urging a resolution of internal discussions in a timeframe that would allow the GOJ to dispatch JSDF members by the time of Sudan's April 2010 election, this was not a hard deadline. He said MOFA has been using the April 2010 elections as an action-forcing event to keep discussions on track. Ultimately, Nishimura noted, the GOJ could dispatch JSDF members later as there would be an ongoing need for peacekeepers in Sudan that would not be limited to the time period in and around the April election.

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